

Representative Larry Springer

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Representative Larry Springer

2006 Session Review

Spring 2006

Dear Neighbors,

Serving as your representative in Olympia over these past two years has been a very rewarding experience.

My priorities in Olympia continue to be finding ways to fund our schools, lower health care costs, and increase housing affordability while looking for ways to strengthen our economy.

These are priorities that are not exclusive to either party. In Olympia I continue to work toward building bridges—not walls.

We passed a fiscally responsible budget that saves \$2 for every \$1 spent – helping to pay down future obligations.

With the help of prosecutors and police, we passed some of the toughest sex offender laws in the nation that will help catch and convict more sex offenders, keeping them off of our streets and away from our children.

Thank you again for allowing me to represent you in Olympia. Please don't hesitate to contact me at any time with your comments and questions.

Sincerely,

Larry Springer
State Representative
45th Legislative District



Protecting your pocketbook

Responsible Budgeting

Governments need to make fiscal responsibility a major priority. This year that is exactly what we did. The Legislature saved \$2 for every \$1 spent, dedicating over \$900 million to help pay off future costs associated with our state's pension system, education funding, and health care programs. It does this without raising taxes. Working with our current and voter-approved performance audit laws, this year's budget will help create stability for years to come.

Helping Seniors

Property taxes continue to be a huge burden to seniors on fixed incomes. This year I voted to reduce interest rates paid by senior citizens and disabled retirees in Washington's property-tax deferral program. Interest rates on deferred property-taxes will drop from eight percent to five percent, helping seniors stay in their homes.



Protecting our community

Locking up sex offenders

I supported a package of legislation to give police and prosecutors the tools necessary to keep these dangerous criminals away from our children. This legislation received unanimous, bi-partisan support in the House and creates:

- ✓ Tough new minimum sentencing requirements (25 years to life) for child rapists,
- ✓ A measure requiring 24 hour electronic monitoring for sex-offenders who have completed their prison terms,
- ✓ The crime of communicating with a minor through email or a computer for immoral purposes,
- ✓ And possession of child pornography as a sex offense.

Protecting Your Property

I received hundreds of letters and emails from concerned property owners regarding the recent U.S. Supreme Court Kelo decision, granting states the right to use eminent domain power to seize private property for private economic development ventures. Most legal experts agree that the Washington State Constitution would prohibit the use of eminent domain to seize private property for another's private profit. But, not wanting to leave anything to chance, I sponsored House Bill 2626 to clarify that private property can never be seized like it was in the Kelo situation. This proposal received quite a bit of discussion in both Houses but never made it to the floor for a vote. Next year, I will continue my work to affirm private property rights.

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Investing in our Children

Funding Education

In my first term in the legislature I was fortunate to sponsor ground breaking legislation that devoted over \$180 million in additional funding for school construction. The state portion of school construction costs have plummeted from nearly 70 percent of the total costs in the early 1980s to less than 30 percent today. This means local property-taxes are now shouldering more than two thirds of construction costs. This legislation will help reduce the burden upon local property tax payers.

Further, in the 2005-07 Operating budget the legislature respected the will of the voters, fully funding Initiatives 728—reducing class sizes, and 732—improving teacher pay.

A record investment of \$600 million will fund emergency repairs, modernization and new construction for K-12 schools throughout the state. This money includes just under \$1 million for renovations to the Emily Dickinson and Rose Hill elementary schools in the Lake Washington School District.

Overall, the 2005-07 Legislature increased state funding for Washington's public schools by \$1.45 billion – about \$1,490 per student.



Early Learning

A child's early years are a time of tremendous growth and development, and their early learning experiences have profound implications for their later success in school and in life.

Thirty percent of children are behind from the day they start kindergarten and many never catch up. I supported The Early Learning Act which creates an Early Learning Council in the Governor's Office to help improve the quality of care across the state.

The reform is strongly supported by business leaders and foundations that are asking for the opportunity to be partners with the state to improve early learning. I look forward to working with the Early Learning Council on ways to better organize and deliver quality services to young children in care.

Did You Know?

- ✓ Once a child reaches age three, 85-90% of his or her core brain structure has been formed.
 - ✓ The sounds a child hears between birth and three will largely determine the size of her adult vocabulary
 - ✓ Between the ages of one and four, children develop the capacity to understand logic and mathematical concepts.
- Source: Wisconsin Council on Children & Families*



Building a Brighter Future

The Home Security Fund

Homelessness is not just a big city problem; it is a problem that affects our entire region and state. Solving this problem will take systemic reform aimed at addressing the causes of homelessness, not simply providing more shelter space. It is clear that the state needs to play a major role in bringing communities together and to provide policy tools and funding to create more affordable and transitional housing.

I introduced the Home Security Fund (HB 2418) that allocates \$25 million a year for four years. These monies fund the Family Services Fund, housing for domestic violence victims and disabled persons, housing vouchers, and they supplement the competitive grant program known as the Housing Trust Fund.

This legislation also sets up the Interagency Council on Homelessness. This Council will look into ways for state agencies to better coordinate with each other to address the causes of homelessness. We will also be implementing a secure database that will help track Washington's homeless population to give us a better road map to solving the causes of homelessness.

Building Affordable Housing

For the past several years skyrocketing property values on the Eastside are making it more and more difficult for families to find decent, affordable places to live. To help give local governments the tools necessary to provide affordable housing, I sponsored a measure (House Bill 2984) to encourage developers to build homes that the average family can afford. I was pleased to see this legislation signed into law by Governor Gregoire in March.

House bill 2984 allows local governments to grant exceptions in local zoning regulations if developers will in turn build affordable housing. Currently local governments can offer incentives, but my proposal creates a framework for government and the private sector to work together. By bridging the gap between the public and private sector we can create a long term solution to rising home costs.

Protecting our health and lowering costs

Covering all Children

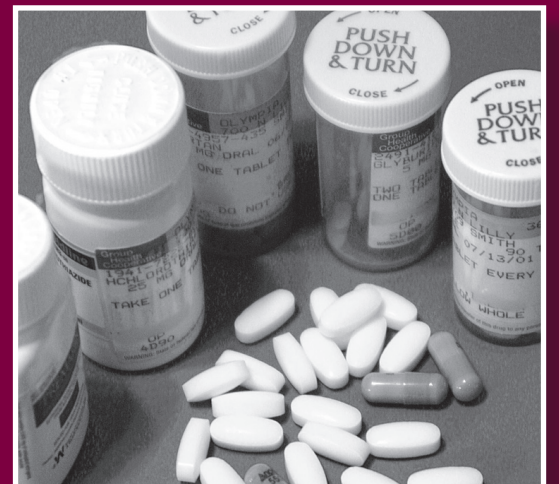
I voted to expand health care coverage for 80,000 additional children, building on our commitment to have every child covered by 2010.



Prescription Drugs

This year the legislature expanded the state's prescription drug purchasing consortium to allow uninsured Washingtonians – as well as private businesses – to join in bulk-purchasing discounts. Recent reports show that a similar program enacted by the state in 2003 is saving tax payers \$60 million this budget cycle. The Health Care Authority expects our new Prescription Drug Purchasing Consortium to help 81,000 senior citizens and 122,000 younger uninsured individuals save money on their prescription medicines.

The new and exciting news is that the Health Care Authority recently announced a new drug discount card that is available to any state resident. The card will reduce costs between 15 and 25 percent for prescription drugs not covered by insurance. The Rx Washington Card provides discounts at most mail order and retail pharmacies across the state. The annual membership fee is \$10 per person. **Those interested in receiving an application for the program should call 1-866-576-3862, or go online at www.rx.wa.gov.**



Protecting our Environment

In 2005 I voted to enact Clean Car standards in our state to reduce pollution, as well as consume less fuel. This year we built on that success:

Protecting the Puget Sound

I voted for legislation investing \$14 million to begin clean-up and a second bill to cut down on pollution from septic tanks to avoid the need for future cleanups.

Electronic Waste

Old TVs and computers are creating a new problem in our landfills, leaking harmful chemicals that dumps aren't meant to handle. We need to recycle e-waste responsibly. A new bipartisan program we created this past session will allow us to do exactly that.

